

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES  
2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation #6  
Additional Citizen Board Members

1. **OBJECTIVE:** Strengthen the capacity of the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) to fulfill the Powers and Duties set forth in the Code of Virginia by increasing the number of citizen board members from 11 to 15.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
  - BVS was established in 2003 as a policy board in the executive branch of state government. The Board consists of:
    - 11 citizen members, appointed by the Governor;
    - 3 *ex officio* members; and
    - 5 legislative members.
  - The Code specifies that: *In making appointments, the Governor shall endeavor to...[select] appointees of such qualifications and experience as will allow them to provide expertise and insight into:*
    1. *Best practices in benefits claims services, medical and health care management, or cemetery operations;*
    2. *Performance measurements and general management principles; and*
    3. *Nonprofit volunteer operations and management.*
  - The Board has three standing committees (Benefits, Care Centers, and Cemeteries). The Board also establishes *ad hoc* committees as required (e.g., Bylaws, Nominating, etc.).
  - The number of Virginia Veterans has increased by 40,000 in the 10 years; the services provided by the Commonwealth have expanded to meet their new or expanded needs.
  - In the past decade, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services has opened five new benefit field offices, two veterans cemeteries, and a veterans care center, and has established the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
  - The *ex officio* and legislative members bring unique and irreplaceable skills and experience to the Board. However, because of the demands on their time (service on other boards, legislative duties, etc.) they are unavailable to serve on committees.
  - Considerable demands are also placed on the Board Chairman and Vice Chairman (providing leadership and direction, representing BVS on other boards, etc.), meaning that these two citizen members are also unavailable to participate in committee work.
  - This leaves only 9 citizen members to do the “heavy lifting” on the committees.
  - Increasing the number of citizen members from 11 to 15 will provide the Board with additional expertise and capacity to meet Code-mandated requirements and will improve committee operations, enabling the Board to better serve Virginia’s veterans and support the Governor’s goal of making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.
  - The increase in members will result in a small increase in mileage reimbursement.
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** That the number of citizen members on the Board of Veterans Services be increased from 11 to 15.